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ABSTRACT

This booklet provides a two day lesson plan that may be used by teachers in conjunction with a videotape program to familiarize their students with Chinese music, musical instruments, and playing techniques. Appended are descriptions and photographs of popular Chinese instruments, a guide to Chinese music resources in the San Francisco Bay area, and a bibliography on Chinese music. (EB)

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Secondary School Curriculum Materials

The Sounds of Silk and Bamboo

Chinese Music

Teacher's Handbook

Chinese Culture Foundation

Chinese American Ethnic Heritage Project

San Francisco, California

UD 019940

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The Sounds of Silk and Bamboo

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Requests for information concerning this manual or the Ethnic Heritage Studies Project should be addressed to:

Chinese Culture Foundation
750 Kearny Street
San Francisco, California 94108

This teacher's guide was written by Joe Huang.

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Lui Pui-yuen
Lawrence Lui
Wilma Pang

Graphics by Chester Fong

Ethnic Heritage Studies Project

Project Director: Dr. Shirley Sun
Project Coordinator: Joe Huang

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FOREWORD

The real heritage of the American people is the coming together of rich cultures of all the peoples who have built this land through their labor and their aspirations. Very little of this cultural diversity is reflected in most texts; however, and when accounts of non-white peoples do appear they are frequently filled with serious distortions.

The Chinese American Heritage Studies Project was organized to develop curricula materials which would address this need. Among the materials produced are: Chinese Music (Teacher's Guide and video tape); Chinese New Year (Audio-visual unit and Teacher's Hand Book); Chinese Food (Teacher's Guide); Tai-chi Chuan (Teacher's Guide); and Chinese Art and Inventions (Display Panels). These materials have benefited greatly from the contributions of the many talented artists and other specialists concentrated at the Chinese Culture Center. In addition, some of the materials incorporate the participation of secondary teachers at a series of teacher training workshops conducted by the Chinese American Heritage Studies Project.

Our approach has been based on the premise that the Chinese American cultural heritage should not be viewed as foreign or exotic. Brought over by early Chinese settlers, Chinese culture has become inextricably woven into the fabric of American life. This series, therefore, is intended for use by all American students, not only Chinese-Americans.

It is our hope that the materials in this series may provide an introduction to these aspects of Chinese culture, and that they might serve as a beginning upon which others will build.

Dr. Shirley Sun
Project Director

INTRODUCTION

This teacher's guide accompanies "The Elegant Sounds of Silk and Bamboo", an educational half-hour videotape program on Chinese music available to school groups on loan through the Chinese Culture Foundation or through KQED Open Studio. This guide includes supplementary information which can be used as follow-up to the videotape program.

The information in this guide are presented in the form of a two-day lesson revolving around the videotape program. The first day is allocated to seeing and discussing the videotape. The second day, using supporting materials, will review the points mentioned in the show regarding Chinese musical instruments and playing techniques.

Teachers wishing additional information, resource materials, or assistance in planning a school program on Chinese music should contact the Chinese Culture Foundation, 750 Kearny Street, San Francisco, California 94108. Tel.: (415) 986-1822.

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NOTE ON ROMANIZATION AND PRONOUNCIATION OF CHINESE WORDS

The names of Chinese instruments and other Chinese words are given in the official pinyin romanization system of the People's Republic of China. This romanization system is more accurate linguistically, but may differ from other spellings commonly used in this country. In addition, some spellings used in this country may be taken from the Cantonese pronunciation which is prevalent among Chinese-Americans.

CHINESE WORD	PINYIN	OTHER SPELLINGS	APPROX. ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION
琵琶	pipa	p'i - p'a	"pee pah"
箏	zheng	cheng	"jung"
二胡	erhu	ehr-hu, yee wu (Cantonese)	"err-who"
笛	di or dizi	ti or ti-tze	"dee dzz"
笙	sheng	sheng	"shung"
琴	qin	chin, ch'in, kum(Cantonese)	"chin"

TWO-DAY LESSON PLAN

One-Day Lesson: "The Sounds of Silk and Bamboo"

Objective:

The purpose of this videotape is to introduce to students the sights and sounds of Chinese instrumental music. In the program, six basic Chinese instruments are introduced - the pipa (lute), zheng (zither), erhu (violin), di (flute), sheng (mouth organ), and qin (harp).* Each instrument is featured in one song, followed by a brief discussion with the musician on the special features of that instrument and the playing techniques used.

Resource Material:

1. "The Elegant Sounds of Silk and Bamboo" 3/4" videocassette, 50 minutes long, available for school use through the Chinese Culture Center, or through KQED Open Studio.

Discussion Notes:

1. Although the Chinese instruments in the show may look unusual to many American students, point out that many actually predate, and may have influenced the development of common Western instruments.
2. Musically speaking, the timbre of Chinese instrumental music tends to be "thin". One important reason for this is that in the past Chinese musicians did not play for large audiences in symphony halls, but rather for small gatherings, much like chamber music. Consequently, there was no need to develop instruments with a large volume.

*Please refer to page 7 on spelling and pronunciation of Chinese musical instruments.

In the last fifty years, Chinese music has undergone many changes, one of which is the development of large symphonies. As the requirements for Chinese music change, so, too, do the instruments and the musician's playing techniques. Notice that the zheng (zither) and the erhu (violin) originally had silk strings, but have now been switched to steel.

3. Chinese ensemble playing has been classified as either monophonic, a single melody line played by several musicians, or heterophonic, several instruments playing slight modifications of the same melody line. In contrast, Western music is considered as polyphonic, with different instruments playing in harmony.

   Students should notice this difference in Chinese ensemble pieces, where the different instruments seem to be following each other. Western ensembles have emphasized contrasts in sound pitch (harmonies), Chinese ensembles have emphasized contrasts in sound quality (timbre).

One-Day Lesson: FOLLOW-UP TO VIDEOTAPE

Objective:

To review and expand upon the information presented in the video tape program. Points which were briefly covered in the program will be further discussed and explained.

Resources:

1. If possible, teachers should arrange for a community Chinese musician to come and demonstrate on one or more Chinese instruments.
2. Visual display materials, such as a set of miniature Chinese instruments, are available through the Multicultural Resource Center in Fort Mason, San Francisco, and are also for sale at the Mandarin Company in Chinatown.
   Records and how-to-play books can be found in several book-stores and record shops in Chinatown.
   Other teaching aids on Chinese music may be available through the Chinese Culture Center.
   (for additional information, see Appendix B).

Lesson:

This follow-up lesson may utilize either a guest performer or recordings of Chinese music to discuss any of the points mentioned in the videotape program. The structure of the videotape program is to emphasize one distinctive feature of Chinese music through each instrumental piece. In certain cases, the features are mentioned specifically to stimulate cross-cultural comparisons with other types of music.
The topics that were covered through each instrument are:

INSTRUMENT	TOPIC
pipa (lute)	Finger techniques
zheng (zither)	The pentatonic scale, use of the vibrato

INSTRUMENT	TOPIC
erhu (violin)	Use of natural products in the construction of Chinese instruments
di (flute)	Reedy timbre, use of sliding notes
sheng (mouth organ)	Only Chinese instruments on which cords can be played, influence on Western pipe organs.
qin (harp)	Historical associations, classical tradition.

Appendix A gives general descriptions and photographs of each of these instruments, along with notes on these special points.

APPENDIX A

CHINESE INSTRUMENTS

Instrument: PIPA
(pronounced "pee pah")

Size: about 36" long

Script:

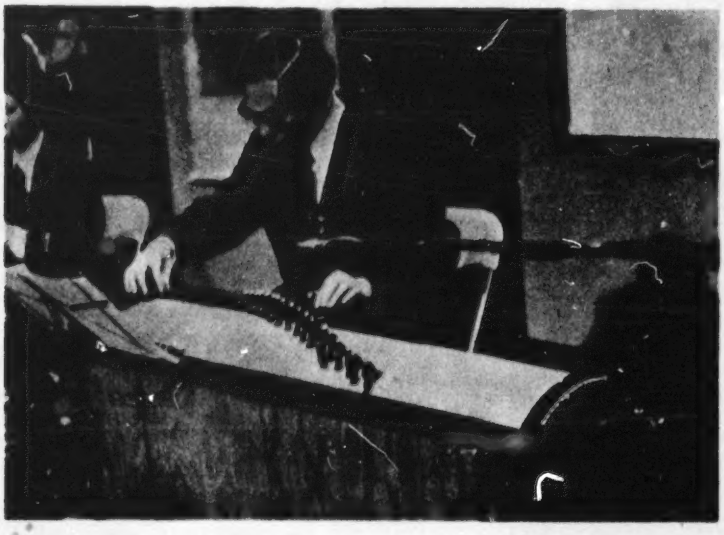
"The pipa originally came to China from Central Asia over 1000 years ago. It is similar to a lute in shape. The pipa has four strings; the front is made of wutung, a tree found only in China, and the neck is made of ivory. The frets are made of bamboo; the pipa is held in an upright position when played."

Notes:

1. The pipa is one of the most popular Chinese musical instruments, and one of the few for which a great number of modern pieces have been written. Similar to the violin in Western music, the pipa has both a function in formal "classical" music, as well as in informal folk and popular music.

2. Although bearing some resemblance to the guitar, (which can be traced to Central Asia), the pipa uses a different principle for sound projection. Instead of a large, hollow soundbox with a large soundhole, the pipa uses a solid soundbox with a tiny soundhole hidden under the bridge. Therefore, the sound of the pipa is more like that of a banjo. In addition, the pipa uses quite different playing techniques, including plucking with both the thumb and the fingers.

Instrument: ZHENG (cheng), pronounced "jung"



Size: about 50 inches long, and 12 inches wide

Script: "The Japanese koto was derived from the Chinese zheng. The zheng has as few as 13 and as many as 25 strings. The zheng is tuned to a Chinese pentatonic scale, which has five notes, instead of the Western seven-note scale. In the song, the musician also made a lot of rippling sounds which are called vibratos."

Notes:

1. The zheng is perhaps better known in this country through its Japanese derivative, the koto. The number of strings on the zheng varies, but the most common type has 18. Each string has a moveable bridge which is used for fine tuning. The strings on a zheng used to be of silk, but have since been replaced by steel, which gives a brighter and louder sound.

2. The zheng can be used to demonstrate the Chinese pentatonic scale. Pentatonic means a five-note scale. Running a finger across the strings of the zheng will give this scale (do, re, mi, sol, la). Although most Chinese instruments are tuned to this scale, some are not and much of modern Chinese music no longer restricted to this scale.

3. The vibrato is a musical technique where the pitch of a note is raised or lowered. It is a technique widely used in Chinese music and can be heard on almost all zheng pieces.

On the zheng , the vibrato is done by pushing down on the string as it is vibrating. The vibrato can be very small or as large as 1 1/2 steps. In Chinese music, slight variations of musical pitch are used on purpose for color and effect. While this may make the music sound "out of tune" to the Western ear, it is acceptable to and even appreciated by Chinese musicians as variations of a theme. One must remember that the concept of "true pitch" is very subjective, and varies from culture to culture.

4. The zheng should not be regarded as a harp laid sideways. It has a soundhole on the underside of the instrument which amplifies and projects the sounds of the strings. In this respect, the zheng can be compared to a lute or a banjo.

Instrument: ERHU
(pronounced "err who")

Size: The erhu is one of a family of fiddles. The erhu, comparable in range to the viola, is about 24 " in length. Other fiddles range from 16 inches to over 4 feet in length.

Script:

"The erhu, like the violin, is a bowed instrument. However , the erhu has only two strings, and the bow is fitted between strings and is not drawn on top.

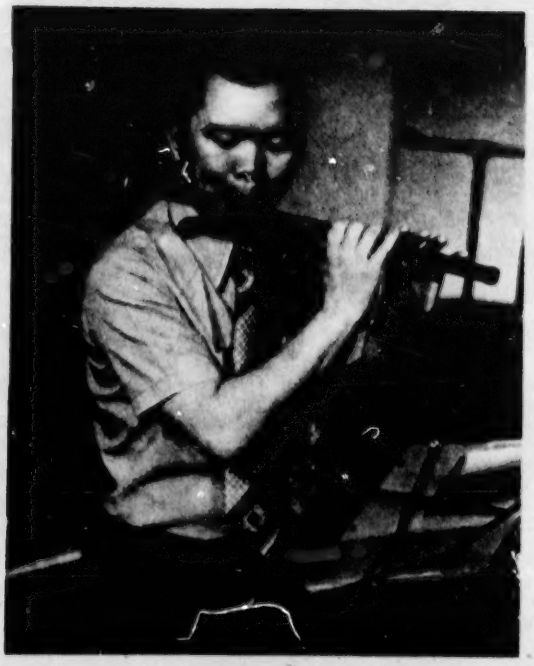
"The construction of the erhu is also interesting. The soundbox is made of teakwood, and the strings are made of steel. On the original erhus they were made of silk. The membrane over the soundbox is a piece of snakeskin."

Notes:

1. The Chinese fiddles are called generically hu, which originally meant foreign or barbaric. This is because these fiddles were first imported from Mongolia about 700 years ago. Incidentally, erhu means "number two fiddle", er being the word for two.

2. The erhu is an excellent instrument for discovering how the Chinese use available materials to construct their instruments. The soundbox on the erhu can be made of wood, bamboo, or even a coconut shell. The front of the soundbox is covered with a vibrating membrane, which is generally a piece of snakeskin, but can also be a piece of animal hide. The rest of the erhu, except the strings, is made of wood.

Instrument: DI or DIZI (Ti-tze), pronounced "dee" or "dee dzz"



Size: From 12 to 24 inches long

Script: "One of the most distinctive sounds in Chinese music is that of the dizi, a bamboo flute. Its sound is often associated with pastoral scenes, mountain scenes, and quiet farming villages. The dizi has a special reedy sound, almost like a human voice. This is because the dizi has a special hole which is covered with a thin piece of bamboo membrane. During the song, the musician is also able to make sliding notes."

Notes:

1. The Chinese bamboo flute is very popular in Chinese music. It differs from other bamboo flutes, such as the Japanese yokobye, in having a special sound hole between the blow hole and the finger holes. This hole is covered with a thin piece of bamboo skin which vibrates when the flute is played. This gives the dizi a reedy, sharp tone which contrasts sharply with the rounded sound of a Western flute.

2. On the dizi notes are held directly by the fingertips, instead of by mechanical means as in the Western flute. Much use is made of "sliding notes", during which a musician will slide his fingertip on and off the finger hole.

Instrument: SHENG
(pronounced "shung")

Size: 12 to 15 inches tall

Notes:

1. The sheng is the Chinese mouth organ. A Chinese sheng was brought to Russia in the 18th Century, and led to the development of the harmonica, and a major revision of the pipe organ.

2. The sheng is made of 17 bamboo pipes, each of which is fitted with a brass reed which vibrates to produce the notes. The pipes are pierced to prevent their sounding except when the musician stops the holes in the bottom part of each pipe.

3. The sheng is unusual in Chinese music in being the only instrument which is generally played in chords, instead of separate notes. Each note on the sheng is actually a chord made up of from three to four notes.

Instrument: QIN (chin), pronounced "chin"

Size: 36 to 42 inches long, 10 inches wide.

Script: "In China people have long associated the qin with scholars and philosophers. The qin is one of the most ancient of Chinese instruments and the most revered. It is the precursor of the zheng which was heard earlier. When listening to the qin , try to listen for the beauty of each individual note."

Notes:

1. The qin is a bridgeless zither with seven strings, compared to the zheng, which has from 13 to 25 strings mounted on moveable bridges. The qin is closely identified with China's classical heritage, and has become a symbol of culture and the arts, much like the lute has been so associated in Western literature and art.

2. The music of the qin is said to be philosophical and meditative. It is not supposed to excite, but to have a tranquil and calming effect. " Painting with sounds might be a way to describe its essential quality. " [1] Instead of listening for a rich assortment of sounds, one must listen for a simple and clear succession of individual notes.

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1. R.H. Van Gulik, The Lore of the Chinese Lute, Tokyo: Tuttle, 1968. page 1.

APPENDIX B

RESOURCE GUIDE

1. Bay Area Resources for Chinese Music
2. Bibliography

BAY AREA RESOURCES FOR CHINESE MUSIC

1. Community Music Groups -

Contact the Multi cultural Resource Center, Building 111, Fort Mason. Ask about the Flowing Streams Ensemble, which has been very active in promoting Chinese music in San Francisco schools.

In addition, there are several music clubs in Chinatown which may be of help in contacting guest performers:

Cathay Club	772 Commercial Street
Chinese Recreation Center	Mason and Washington
Chinese Classical Music Club	63 Brenham Place
Nam Chong Music Club	143 Waverly Place
Chinese Music Association	44 Massasoit Street
Chinese Folk Dance Association	617 Clay Street
Hoy Fung	782 Sacramento Street

2. Sheet Music, Chinese Instruments, and Books:

(Note: Most sheet music will be in Chinese number notation, which is actually quite easy to learn, i.e., 1 = do, 2 = re, etc.; however, it will take some time to develop a reading knowledge. In addition, almost all how-to-play books will be in Chinese.)

Mandarin Company, 64 Wentworth 398-5471

This store has records, musical instruments and books. Their display of musical instruments is worth a field trip in itself.

Chinese Culture and Arts, 241 Columbus 397-4850

This store has musical instruments and how-to-play books from Taiwan.

Lawrence Lui, contact at 800 Grant Ave, 982-0940 or 391-2542

He has musical instruments and sheet music.

New China Bookstore, 1260 Stockton (at Broadway) 956-0752

This store has sheet music and how-to-play books from the People's Republic of China. Simple sheet music is in number notation, but complete orchestral scores are in staff notation.

Everybody's Bookstore, 840 Kearny Street 781-4989

This store has orchestral scores from the People's Republic of China.

3. Records:

There are a limited number of records of Chinese music on American labels, such as Lyrichord. These are available at any large record store.

Lyrichord Records:

7142 Chinese Masterpieces from the Cheng
7132 Chinese Masterpieces for the Erh-hu
792 China's Instrumental Heritage
7 2 Chinese Classical Music (Wei Chung Loh, performer)

UNESCO Collection:

4000 The Music of China (Chinese Instruments)

Folkways Records:

FP 12 Chinese Classical Music

There are also a wide selection of records available in Chinatown that are from Hong Kong and China. They can be purchased at the following stores:

Records from China:

(This includes both modernized traditional music, as well as Western style symphonic and band music.)

New China Bookstore, 1260 Stockton	956-0752
Everybody's Bookstore, 840 Kearny St.	781-4989
China Books and Periodicals, 2929 24th St.	282-2994

Records from Hong Kong:
(espcially on the labels Four Seas, Art Tune, and Fung Hang.)

Tsing Ping Record Company, 868 Jackson St.,	421-2743
Mee Shing Radio Company, 1051 Grant Avenue	982-5540
Wong's TV-Radio Service, 10 Ross Alley	781-0535
Wah Rock Company, 1252 Stockton St.	982-0994

BIBLIOGRAPHY

(Only books in English are included)

*Starred books and articles are available for reference use at the Chinese Cultural Center Library, 750 Kearny Street, 3rd. floor, San Francisco, Calif. 94108.

I. GENERAL WORKS OF CHINESE MUSIC

1. Malm, William P., Music Cultures of the Pacific, the Near East, and Asia. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1967, pp. 102-129. *

   A good general survey of Chinese music, covering musical theory, description of instruments, and basic musical history. It has line drawings of musical instruments and a short but useable bibliography and discography.

2. Wiant, Bliss, The Music of China. Hong Kong: Chung Chi College, 1965. 161 pp. *

   Although this book is dated, it gives insight into the place of Chinese music in the lives of the Chinese people prior to 1949.

3. Crossley-Holland, Peter. "Chinese Music", from Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, ed. Eric Blom. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1954, Vol. II (C-E), pp. 219 to 248. *

   A detailed article covering tradition, theory, instruments, practice and Chinese musicians of today. The last part is now out-of-date.

4. Pickens, Laurence, "The Music of Far Eastern Asia, China", from the New Oxford History of Music, Vol. I, pp. 84 - 134. *

   This covers prehistory and ethnology, the place of music in Chinese civilization, musical instruments, theory and notation, history of the music, structure of instrumental music, opera and folk song.

5. Pian, Rulan Chao, "China", from the New Oxford Dictionary of Music, pp. 151-157. *

   A concise description of Chinese music, covering history, sources and theory.

6. Van Aalst, J. A., "Chinese Music", reprinted in Liang Tsai-ping, Chinese Music, Chinese Classical Music Association, Taipei, 1964. *

   An archaic (1884) but colorful description of Chinese music by a foreigner who wrote about Chinese music before it had been affected by Western influence.

II. SPECIFIC AREAS OF CHINESE MUSIC

1. Liang Tsai-ping, Chinese Musical Instruments and Pictures, Chinese Classical Music Association, Taipei, 1970. *

Pictures and descriptions of Chinese musical instruments in Chinese and English.

2. Needham, Joseph, Science and Civilization in China, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962. Volume IV, part 1, pp. 126-228. *

Needham's exhaustive 7-volume study on science and technology in China includes a chapter on Chinese research into music and sound with descriptions of Chinese scales and musical theories.

3. van Gulik, R. H., The Lore of the Chinese Lute, Rutland, Charles Tuttle and Co., 1969. *

A study of the qin, its history and cultural legacy.

4. Levis, John Hazedel, Foundations of Chinese Musical Art, New York: Paragon Book Reprint, 1963. *

A study done in the 1930's which attempted to recreate the lost ancient music of China.

5. Lieberman, Frederick, Chinese Music, An Annotated Bibliography, New York: Society for Asian Music, 1970. 157 pages.

6. Duchner, Alexander, Folk Instruments of the World .

includes several photographs of Chinese musical instruments.

III. RELATED BOOKS ON OPERA AND DRAMA

1. Arlington, L. C., The Chinese Drama, New York: Benjamin Blom, 1930, reprinted 1966. *

Description of traditional Peking Opera.

2. Snow, Lois Wheeler, China on Stage, New York: Random House, 1972. *

Treats modern developments in ballet, Peking Opera, and dance in the People's Republic of China.

3. Drama Review , Volume 15, #3, Spring 1971.

A section on Chinese Theater after 1949.

4. China Quarterly , July/September 1973, pp. 478-510.

Chinese Opera after the Cultural Revolution.

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We would appreciate your completing this brief feedback form after you have reviewed or have used this teacher's guide. Your responses, comments, and suggestions will be most helpful in improving the handbooks.

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